



Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Office of Traffic Safety

September 16, 2005

Nevadans are Buckling Up at Record Rates

Survey Results Confirm a 94.8% 2005 Use Rate for Nevada

Carson City, NV~ A survey commissioned by the Nevada Department of Public Safety confirmed the fact that more Nevadans are using safety belts than ever before. The statistics, compiled by the University of Nevada Las Vegas – Transportation Research Center, indicate that safety belt use in Nevada reached 94.8% in 2005, the highest level in the State's history.

"Seat belts are the most effective device for saving the lives of motorists and it is encouraging to see this level of use in Nevada," said Chuck Abbott, Chief of DPS' Office of Traffic Safety. "Saving lives through education is one of Governor Guinn's highest priorities and the more people we can get to buckle up, the better."

In 2004, Nevada posted a seatbelt use rate of 86.6% compared to the national rate of 80%. "The national rate is based on states with primary and secondary enforcement laws," said Abbott. "A driver in a state with a secondary enforcement law can only be cited for not wearing a safety belt if he or she is pulled over for another unrelated offense. Of those states with secondary laws, which include Nevada, preliminary results indicate we are number one in usage for 2005," he continued.

Estimates from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) suggest that sixteen lives will be saved from the increase in Nevada's safety belt usage. The saved lives and reduced injuries equate to an economic cost saving of over \$16 million dollars.

According to the DPS - Office of Traffic Safety, the increase in safety belt use is in large part a result of the outstanding efforts of law enforcement who aggressively enforce belt laws, and media blitzes such as May's "Click it or Ticket-No Exceptions No Excuses" campaign. Almost all of Nevada's law enforcement agencies have participated in this program annually since 2002 (2002 usage rate: 74.9%).

The UNLV survey, conducted in June and July of this year, also disclosed that female drivers buckle up at a higher rate (95.6%) than males (92.0%). SUV and mini-van front seat occupants were buckled up in 96.4% of the observations while pickup occupants had the lowest seat belt use rate at 91.8%. The percentage of passengers in sedans and station wagons who were buckled in was recorded as 94.5%.

Seat belt use was highest in rural Nevada areas at 96% usage, significantly higher than the data recorded in prior years. 2004's rural usage was 87%. Northern urban Nevada was higher (95%) compared to southern urban Nevada's (93.4%) rate.

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The survey also showed that only a small portion of the increase is attributed to out-of- state drivers. While the survey recorded 20,000 observations at 50 statewide locations, 14,485 (72.4%) were vehicles registered in Nevada. Of those observations of vehicles registered in Nevada, 93.2% were belted. This is compared to 94.8% of all vehicle passengers observed.

For more information or for a copy of the survey results, contact Chief Chuck Abbott at the Department of Public Safety’s Office of Traffic Safety at 775-684-7469.

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